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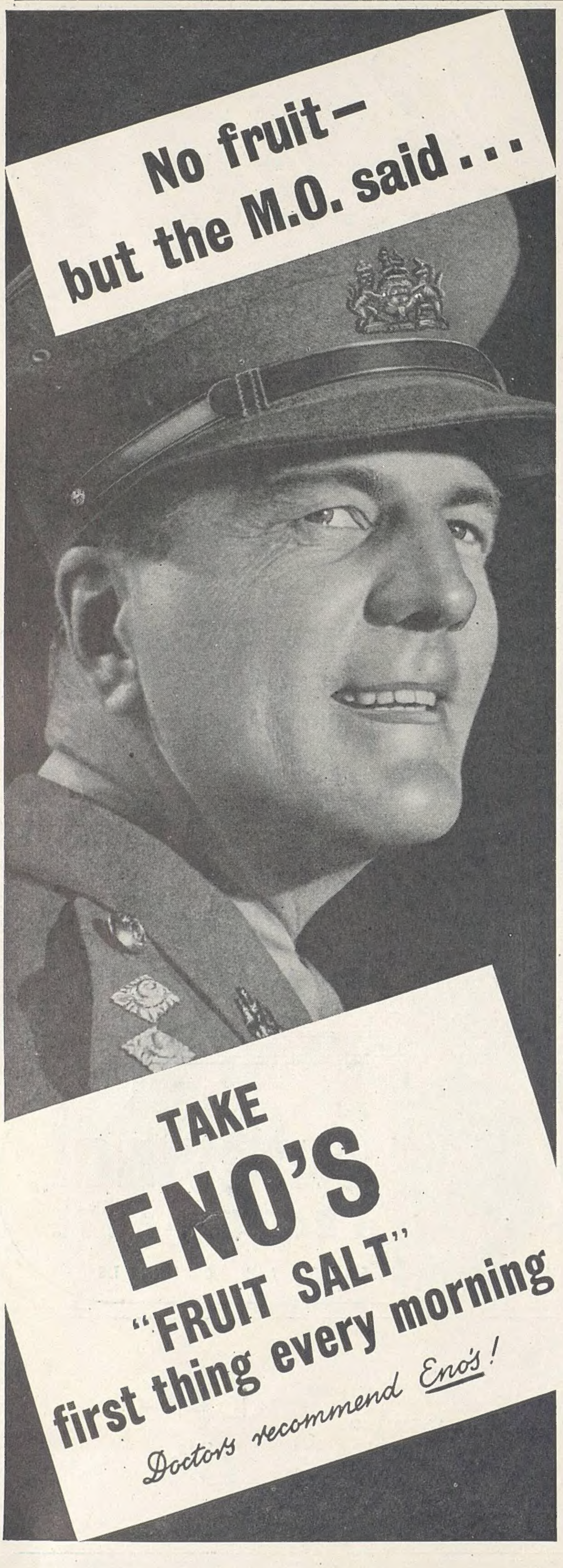

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SCOTLAND'S HARDEST WEARING CLOTH

The Sketch

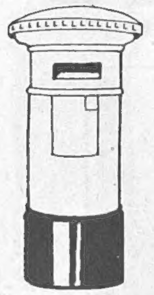
No. 2513—Vol. CXCIII. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 1941. ONE SHILLING.

SEAVACUEES MAKE CONTACTS "DOWN UNDER."

"Our father was a soldier too" proved a password to the heart of the ex-"Digger" on sentry duty at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance when used as an opening gambit by two seavacuees from England. Their father is a London tailor who was badly wounded and gassed in the last war. Their eighteen-year-old sister, Dorothy, is doing war work in London and they have a brother of sixteen in the Old Country.

Please forward

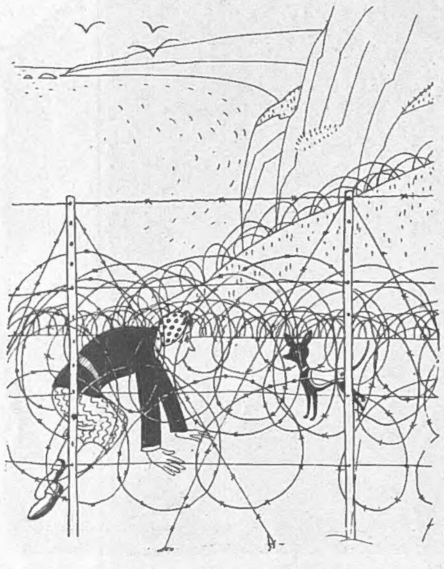
By JOYCE DENNYS.



MY DEAR ROBERT—I took Perry for a walk yesterday afternoon. What with barbed wire, land mines, and gun practice, there are very few places left for us to walk our dogs on. Each new regiment that comes here celebrates its arrival by putting up a new line of barbed wire; but there is still just enough room to squeeze past, though it is beginning to be a near thing for Lady B.

It was a cold morning, and Perry was wearing his little coat with the initial in the corner which came from the place where the Aga Khan's horse-rugs are made, and was sent to Perry by one of his admirers.

He excited a good deal of admiration, prancing along in his jaunty way, like one of those trotting horses they go in for in America. This, apparently, went to his head, and in order to show off a little more he picked his way carefully right into the middle of the barbed wire.



"Started to crawl into the barbed wire after him."

"Look at the little dawg, Mum," said a Child Evacuee.

"Perry!" I cried in agony.

"It's all right, Lady," said a kindly soldier. "Lots of dogs get in there, much bigger than what he is."

"But not with coats on," I said.

Perry, delighted to find everybody's attention focussed on him, had now penetrated as far as it was possible even for a small dog, and decided to make a sensational exit. He turned round, and the thing I was dreading happened: his coat got caught on the barbed wire.

"Perry, *keep still*!" I said, in what I hoped was a calm voice, and I knelt down on the ground and peered at him through the maze of wire.

But Perry has claustrophobia worse than most people, and now, feeling himself held, he immediately flew into a panic. His eyes bulged with terror and he jumped sideways, scratching his shoulder and setting up a shrill screaming.

"Good dog! Good dog!" said the soldier, snapping his fingers encouragingly.

"Mum! Mum! The little dawg 's caught!" yelled the Evacuated Child.

"What 's happened?" shouted several people, running up.

"It 's all *right*, Perry, darling!" I cried. "Keep still, and we 'll get you out."

Perry continued to scream, but at the same time gave me a very meaning look which said, "I am being frightened and hurt. I trust you, and you are doing nothing about it." I choked back a sob, and started to crawl into the barbed wire after him.

"I shouldn't do that, Lady, really I shouldn't," said the soldier.

"Look, Mum!" said the Evacuated Child, who hadn't enjoyed itself so much since it left Hoxton, "the lady 's going in too!"

When Perry saw me coming he stopped screaming and stood quite still. I proceeded carefully, and then my stocking got caught on the wire. I turned round to disengage it, and the scarf round my head got caught; I put up my hand to get it free, and my sleeve got caught; I gave a panicking heave, and the barbed wire closed round me like the tentacles of an octopus.

My first instinct was to start screaming, like Perry, but I thought how annoyed Charles would be if he got to hear of it, so I just said, "I've got caught," and turned on the soldier the same reproachful glance that Perry had turned on me.

"A cup of hot coffee."

"I knew you would," said the soldier, who appeared distressed. "Now, don't move, Lady, and I 'll get the Sergeant. You won't struggle, will you?" he said earnestly, bending down and peering into my face.

I promised I wouldn't, and as soon as he was gone Perry detached himself from the wire and picked his way daintily out, giving me a contemptuous glance as he passed. Back on the path he gave himself a shake and strolled off towards home.

"Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As dog's ingratitude"—I thought sadly.

Quite a crowd had collected by this time, and the Evacuated Child, who had become a sort of Master of the Ceremonies, explained shrilly to each new arrival exactly what had happened.

Faith came strolling along and said that I looked like a fly in the web of a spider. Lady B., like a ministering angel, brought me a cup of hot coffee, which was passed to me on the end of a stick, and the Admiral came bustling up, looking very much the Chairman of the Urban District Council, and asked sternly why he hadn't been told about it before.

After what seemed a very long time the soldier returned with the Sergeant and some wire-cutters, and I was released. I crawled gingerly to the edge of the entanglement, where willing hands were held out to help me, and I was pulled to safety like a shipwrecked sailor from the sea.

"Such a nasty scratch on his shoulder."

The soldier gave me a beaming smile, but the Sergeant looked at me rather bleakly, and the Admiral said, "You 've given a lot of unnecessary trouble, Henrietta."

I slunk off home, and the Lodger met me at the door with a worried face. "Our Love-Boy has come back with such a nasty scratch on his shoulder," she said. "I 'm bathing it with warm water."

"Put some iodine on it," I said viciously.

Soon afterwards I heard Perry yelping with pain, but for the first time in twelve years I ignored it.

Always your affectionate Childhood's Friend, HENRIETTA.

LONDON CHILDREN IN AUSTRALIAN WONDERLAND.

"Is it real?" Young seavacuees from London meet one of Australia's koalas, or Teddy Bears, in the Healesville sanctuary, and find it difficult to believe in.

"And Melbourne's here!" Elsie and Patricia Pallis have a lesson in the geography of their new country from cousin Anita Pallis.

"Did you really have to wear them?" Patricia and Elsie Pallis give a demonstration of gas-mask drill to their cousins, Doreen Jacobs and Anita Pallis.

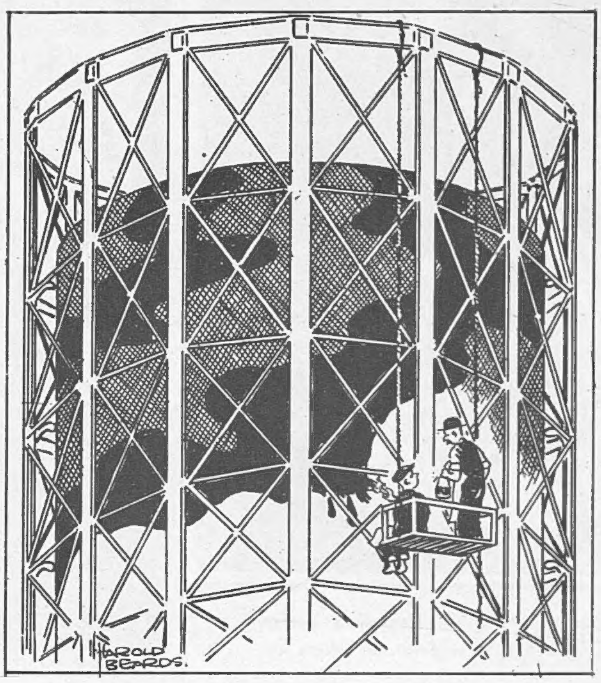
AUSTRALIA is, to the children sent there from England for security, an entrancing wonderland. The sight of kangaroos and koalas in the flesh is exciting, and there are no air-raid warnings or night bombings in the new land of broad vistas. Elsie and Patricia Pallis, aged 11½ and 10 respectively, who recently arrived in Australia to stay with their uncle and aunt, want the Commonwealth to be their permanent home. They were pupils at a London school of juvenile dancing, and gave the "Pallis Sisters" act at board-ship concerts coming over. They quickly forgot the horror of air raids, and their gas-masks have now become queer properties of a half-remembered nightmare.

It really is like home when you have your birthday cake and candles! Patricia Pallis celebrates her tenth anniversary two days after her arrival.

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

Small Prophets, Quick Returns. We have with us, in these troublous days, a great many prophets, amateur and professional. That is natural enough; the more uncertain the future, the greater the urge (strong at all times) to peer into it. I notice that the stars are being rather overworked just now, but in spite of frequent appeals to them, they seem to me to remain highly ambiguous. That, again, is not surprising, for all oracles have been, since time immemorial, masters of ambiguity, their technique being based on a skilful application of the principle: "Heads I win and tails you lose." One is tempted to remind our amateur astrologers of Omar Khayyam's warning against lifting our hands to "that inverted bowl we call the sky"; for Omar took the defeatist view that it "moves impotently on as you or I." Bad astronomy, but possibly good astrology! I have no doubt that there is great activity not only with the planets, but with crystals, planchettes, earthbound spirits, second sight, cards, the palms of hands, and even the leaves of tea. And, of course, there are always the Pyramids. I observe that one eminent pyramidologist announced that Jan. 25, 1941, was to be a "turning-point of the war," though he wisely guarded himself by saying that "the significance of this date may not be immediately apparent." How true! For the significance of most dates is not immediately apparent. However, it is gratifying to learn from the Pyramids that after June 1941, all is going to be gas and gaiters.



"Wouldn't it have been quicker to have planted a couple of rambler roses?"

DRAWN BY HAROLD BEARDS.

The Cocked Hat of Time. Either the weeping or the laughing philosopher can find much matter for mastication in all these attempts to penetrate "behind the veil." To me, they always seem rather pathetic, though I would not reckon myself with the Pooh-Pooh School which dismisses all the so-called supernatural as either fraud or illusion. There is nothing, and there can be nothing, supernatural, if that term means above, beyond or inconsistent with the course of nature. All we mean when we talk about the "supernatural" is that we have come across something (always assuming that it is really authenticated by reliable evidence) which we cannot fit in with our understanding of nature; and as our understanding of nature is extremely limited, it would be remarkable if we did not sometimes encounter so-called mysteries and miracles. The duck-billed platypus is a mystery and a miracle, and it is no use adopting the attitude of the well-known natural philosopher who said, when he first saw the giraffe, that he simply did not believe it. Modern theories have knocked Time into such a cocked hat that you never know whether you are looking at the front or the back of it; and it is well known that some of our pundits are convinced that there is nothing scientifically impossible in "seeing into the future."

A Modern Seer. That there have been genuine prophets I do not doubt; and I happen to have come across one recently who laid no claim to "supernatural" powers, but professed to be able to make accurate predictions simply by the accurate reading of history. And some of his predictions, made fifty years ago, were certainly remarkable. He was an American historian named Henry Adams, the great-grandson of one President of the United States, and the grandson of another. It would take too long to explain his theory of the "lines of force" in history. It was laughed at by all the experts of his day. The best answer to his critics is to quote some of his prophecies.

Now, and Then. In 1897 he predicted a great convulsion of Western civilisation about the year 1917, and another and worse in the decade 1930-1940. In the same year, he wrote of Germany: "For the last generation since 1865, Germany has been the great disturbing element of the world, and until its expansive force is decidedly exhausted, I see neither political nor economic equilibrium possible. . . . All her neighbours are in terror for fear she will explode . . . next time she will blow out eastwards." Writing in 1897 of a coming "reaction against our old-fashioned liberalism," he foresaw Fascism and Nazism as a "collapse of parliamentarianism and the reversion to centralised government." In 1904, he saw Russia "sailing straight into another French Revolution which may upset all Europe and us too," and in 1898 he had already foreshadowed Bolshevism as "the Russian millennium of a centralised despotic socialism." He declared that the world would "break its neck" between 1930 and 1940; and the last prediction, made in 1903, which I shall quote is, I fear, rather depressing: "My figures coincide in fixing 1950 as the year when the world must go smash." Whether the learned historian was in league with the planets or the spirits I do not know, but I think he would have been worth a great deal to any Sunday newspaper.

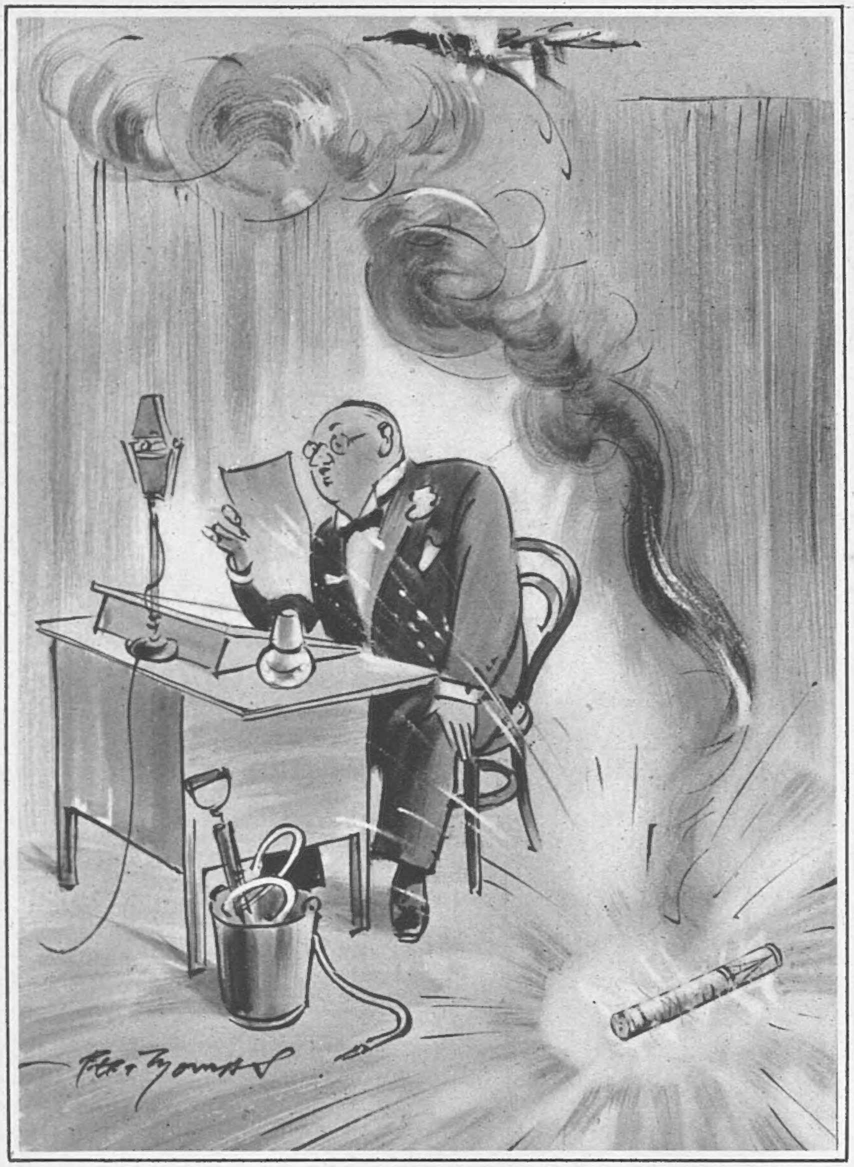
"My nephew in the R.A.F. got into trouble last week and had to bale out."
"Dear me! And what was his offence?"

DRAWN BY SILENUS.

Bacterial Warfare. Not all prophets about this war have been as accurate as Henry Adams. We have all formed false pictures of what the war would be like, though we ought to have been warned by experience that it would be very different from anything we expected. I suppose there was one thing on which we were all agreed—that after fifteen months of strains and stresses, the winter would have a high old time with epidemics. Having lived for some weeks in an atmosphere of influenza, measles, and mumps, I should have been inclined to say that it had been a highly epidemical winter; but the figures are against me. The 'flu scourge has been only half as fatal in 1941 (517 deaths) as in the two preceding years, there has been only half as much scarlet fever and typhoid as in 1938, and though diphtheria has been much worse than in 1940, it has been far less common than in 1938. What the medical explanation is, I can't guess. My own explanation is quite simple—namely, that neither human beings nor bacteria ever seem to behave as you expect them to behave.

The Last Word. The feminine sex used to be associated with the distaff, and perhaps the disappearance of the distaff from common use is partly responsible for that "sex equality" which has rapidly made the "stronger" sex so unequal. It is therefore gratifying to all men (worthy of the name) to learn that women throughout the land are returning to the hand-loom. The cause of this Back to the Loom movement comes from an unexpected source—hats. Hats are wanted for export to North and South America (strange ! I thought they made lots of hats over there, and made them rather well). But how find the materials for them ? The Women's Rural Institutes have rallied round to a woman, with (as my source of information tells me) "thousands of enthusiastic, nimble-fingered members." Among the materials from which they are making smart and exclusive models, I find mention of tufts of rabbit-fur, duck's feathers, varnished or "embalmed" flowers from the hedgerows, string, and dried grass. It only goes to show that even in matters of fashion, you can't beat Nature. Robinson Crusoe evidently missed his vocation; what a hat-designer he would have made. The Swiss Family were also lucky; all they had to do was to reach up to the nearest bush and pull down a Paris Model. It is all very unfair to us men. *I* can't get a hat made of string or duck's feathers. And if I tried to wear one, I should probably be arrested or certified. Talk about sex discrimination !

Kermesse Héroïque. The fact is, the whole world is at sexes and sevens. The latest suggestion for increasing the unfair advantages of women is one which really strikes terror to the heart and threatens a complete upheaval of society. It comes from a London vicar; and I never felt more tempted to say: "Who will rid me of this turbulent priest?" He actually suggests a trade union of housewives! He argues, with fiendish cunning: "Housewives have the lowest-paid job. There is no insurance scheme for them like other workers have" (*sic*—I do not hold him responsible for the reporter's grammar). "They must rely on their husband's generosity. Why shouldn't they form themselves into a union which would probably get all these benefits for them?" One has heard a good deal lately about Union Now; is this another example of it? This thing is a virulent epidemic. It is not so long since somebody was suggesting a Clergymen's Trade Union—and now housewives ! Women, beware ! Try your Housewives' Union, and you will find that the answer will be a Househusbands' Union ! Indeed, such an organisation—I suggest, as a tentative title, the S.P.C.H., or Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Husbands—is long overdue. If there is to be this sauce, then let geese and ganders share it. I can see only one thing in favour of a Housewives' Union. They say a woman's work is never done. That, at least, seems to be a sound Trade Union principle.



"We are closing down for a while owing to a pyro-technical hitch."

DRAWN BY BERT THOMAS.

Too Good to be True. However, the girls can't have it all their own way. It looks as if a certain amount of healthy Victorianism were creeping back. Tell me, as man to man, have you ever heard of a mannequin *with a chaperon* ? Neither have I ; and yet I read that eighteen mannequins are going to South America to exhibit London fashions, accompanied by two male escorts (that is not so unusual) and two female chaperons. What is more, they have got to be in by midnight, and they are not going to be allowed any latchkeys. It 's worse than the Barretts of Wimpole Street ! What false impressions one gets ! Who would have thought of Buenos Aires as a city of chaperons and curfew ? Once upon a time there was a certain suggestion of Babylon about the mere word mannequin or chorus girl. Nowadays, practically all mannequins are the daughters of bishops or Cabinet Ministers, and all chorus girls are Young Ladies, whose respectability is very painful to one brought up in the Edwardian tradition—why, they have even ceased marrying into the aristocracy ! The next thing we shall hear is that every Young Lady must be accompanied to and from the Stage Door by a *duenna*. No Male Escorts need apply.

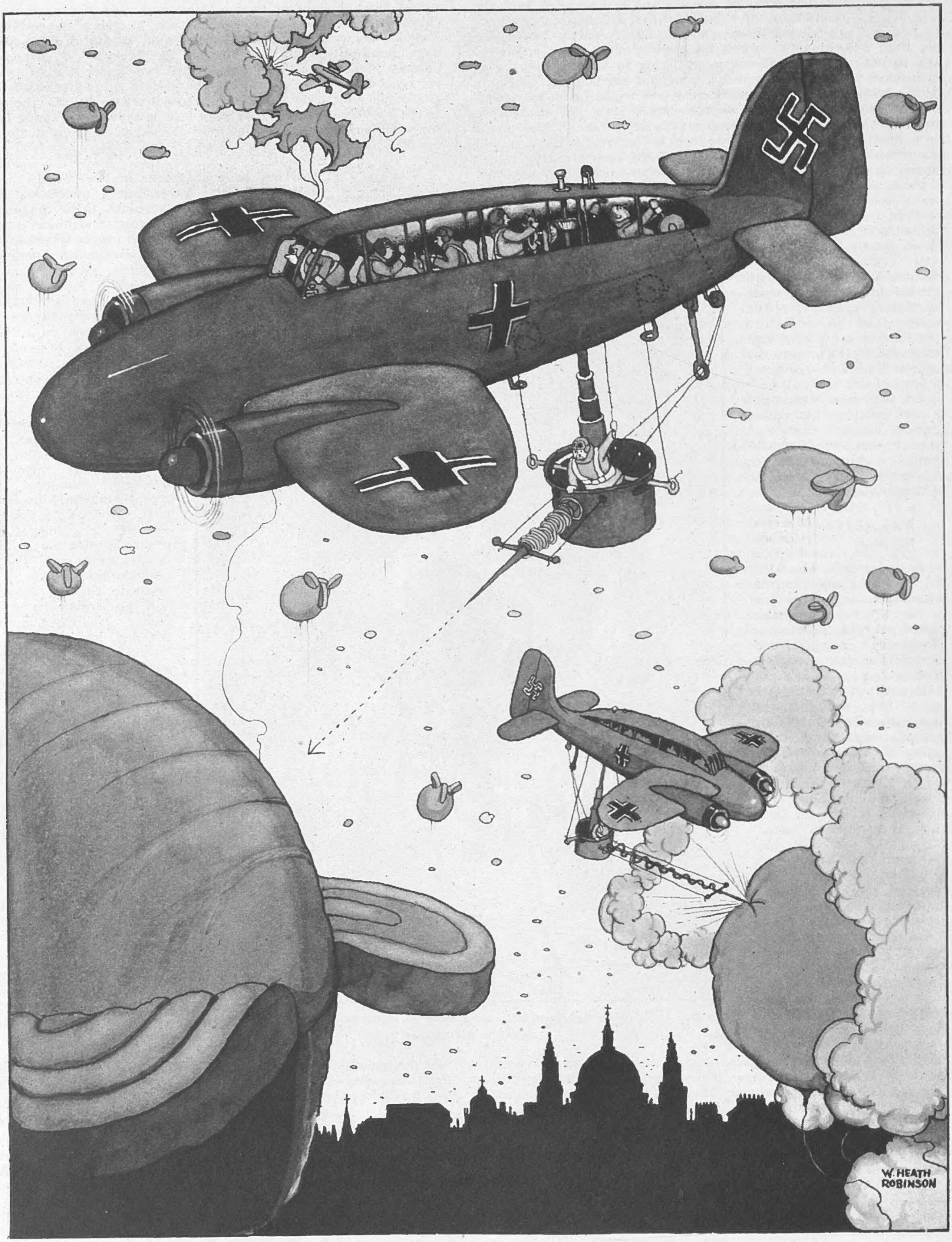
The Six Commandments. Do they have chaperons in Hollywood ? They have Mothers, I know, but I understand that their function is not so much to be dragons as to be Part of the Build-Up (if I have the correct technical expression). The trouble about mothers as chaperons, in these skittish days, is that they sometimes need a bit of mothering themselves. Anyhow, chaperons or no chaperons, mothers or no mothers, there is a certain—shall we say transience ?—a certain element of here today and gone to-morrow—about some movie marriages which has caused concern to narrow-minded moralists. Why not (some cynics have asked) get the decree nisi pronounced before the marriage is solemnised ?

Warned by these discouraging examples, two recently-married film players have drawn up a Code of Domestic Happiness. It is worth the attention of others besides screen stars. The Six Commandments are: (1) Separate banking accounts and no arguments about money. (2) Fifteen minutes per day, and no more, of "shop" talk. (3) Never appear together in the same picture. (4) Never lunch together. (5) Never compile a scrap-book. (6) No interviews on marriage or home life. It will be a satisfaction to non-professional couples to feel that they can observe most of these rules—even Number (1), if they are wise—without great difficulty. But I am puzzled by Number (4). What is there about luncheon so perilous to conjugal bliss ? Breakfast is notorious, but is a spouse necessarily odious over a light, bright luncheon ? The thought is perturbing.

Incense. Apart from matrimony, it seems to me that the way of film-stars is becoming increasingly difficult. Nowadays they not only have to take innumerable socks on the jaw, be thrown into ponds, and have their hair pulled out in handfuls, but now they have to be odoriferous. One would have been inclined to say—

That which we call a Star
By any other name would smell as sweet;

but it will not be so now that the Smellies (charming word !) have arrived, or at least are threatened. When the dark, languorous beauty makes her entrance, a whiff of her "tell-tale" perfume will drift across the auditorium. When they fry eggs and bacon in the log cabin, the appetising aroma will make a thousand mouths water. The new-mown hay, the Roses Round the Door—even the banana munched by the Comic Boy—all will yield their subtle incense. Mr. Clark Gable, it seems, is to exude tobacco; Mr. Spencer Tracy the pine-scent of the great open spaces; while "Christmas Night" perfume has been allotted to Miss Claudette Colbert, and "My Sin" to Miss Hedy Lamarr. Well, I suppose there are no bounds to realism, and there will be at least one advantage in Scented Celluloid—it may drown the peppermint-drops and Californian Poppy in one's immediate neighbourhood !



PATENT BALLOON-BURSTERS OVER LONDON.

Foiled by our barrage balloons, Heath Robinson finds the characteristic German thoroughness has been exercised in finding counter-effects of calculated ingenuity.

DRAWN BY W. HEATH ROBINSON.

"WELL, CHEERIO! GEORGE—DON'T KISS ME IN FRONT OF ALL THESE GIRLS!"

DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

NOW that the Aid to Britain Bill is through, and America is all geared to help Britain in her war-effort, I can't help wishing that our good friends across the Atlantic would slip in just one spiritual comfort amongst the 'planes and guns and food and ammunition—a copy of Walt Disney's film " FANTASIA." I want to see " Fantasia " as I have seldom wanted to see—and hear—any other motion picture. Possibly the longing for forbidden fruit has something to do with it. I know that the odds are heavy against the film coming our way until the war is over. For this special experiment in music-film requires special apparatus for showing. It has been recorded on four separate sound-tracks, so that you get the illusion of sound coming behind, in front, and from either side of you. Disney had his own apparatus made for the projection of the picture—twelve sets of apparatus, at £10,000 a whack, for road-showing in America. In normal times, of course, this apparatus would have been sent over to England with the print, or specially built in this country. But in these days, few people will blame him for balancing £10,000 against the risk of a bomb.

I am told, however, that there is just a chance that the film may be recorded, for general release, on normal sound-track. In that case, we should see it in England before the war is over, although we shall miss, I understand, the peculiar depth of sound-illusion. Well, so far as I am concerned, any " Fantasia " is better than no " Fantasia," and the recording that was good enough for " Snow White " and " Pinocchio " should be all right with me.

" Fantasia," which now runs well on towards the three-hour mark, started life as a Mickey Mouse short, called " The Sorcerer's Apprentice." Gradually, in Disney's hands, and under Leopold Stokowski's baton, it grew and grew, until the final piece represents a symposium of the work of eight composers, each animated by the drawings of Disney's fantastic workshop. While the film was in production, it was known around the lot as " the concert feature." Something like two thousand titles were submitted by the studio staff before they arrived at the ultimate " Fantasia." Amongst the more ribald and flippant titles suggested were " Bach to Stokowski and Bach Again," " Dr. Disney's Follies," " Klassy Konsert Kapers," " One Hundred Men and a Mouse," " Unsilly Symphony," and " Mickey's Band Concert of 1940." After all this cerebration, the present title was discovered by a happy accident. A man just looked up " Music " in the encyclopædia, and tumbled across the word " Fantasia." Or so they say.

While " Fantasia," so far as English audiences are concerned, belongs to the dim and golden world of maybe, there is one pleasant surprise in the London cinemas at this moment. That is a French film—the first French film for months—at the re-opened Studio One. It is called " CIRCONSTANCES ATTENUANTES," and is claimed to be the last film brought out of France before the armistice. Not a great film, it is good and gay, " *cent pour cent gai*," as the French themselves say. It is the story of an ex-judge (Michel Simon), famed for his heavy sentences, who is forced by the accidents of travel to put in an hour or two at a cheap *bistro*. Here he meets the " *mauvaises filles* " and the " *mauvais garçons* " of the district, and finds himself, under the mellowing influence of good food and excellent wine, more and more in sympathy with their viewpoint.

Partly to amuse himself, partly to teach the admirable lesson of " crime doesn't pay," the Judge appears to join their band. His long experience of crime, his subtle knowledge of the law, make him appear to them a very prince among thieves. And then comes trouble. " La Panthère " (Mila Parely) is released from prison, and recognises the good comrade as the judge who sentenced her without the option. Since " Circonstances Attenuantes " is comedy, pure comedy, the Judge escapes from his dilemma after a bad half-hour, instead of getting his throat cut in the gutter, as would undoubtedly have happened in the grimmer type of French production. His wise words on their " *peu reluisant métier* " bring home the moral to his amiably delinquent listeners. The film ends with a sunny picture of bad girls and bad boys turning to a life of honesty, what time the good Judge and his wife—I forgot to tell you that he had his lady with him—continue their interrupted journey, secure in the mellow sense of duty done.

CARMEN MIRANDA appears in *" Down Argentine Way " (Regal, Marble Arch) without ever having set foot in Hollywood, where it was made. The " Brazilian Bombshell," as she is called, shot to stage fame through glamorous rendering of South American songs in " Streets of Paris," a Broadway production. Owing to New York contracts, she was unable to go to the film city, and a special crew was sent up to produce the sequences in which she appears. In the film she reigns as queen of the night spots, and sings three of the song-hits which made her famous.*

BETTY GRABLE *as Glenda Crawford in " Down Argentine Way " is opposite to Don Ameche as Ricardo Quintana, an Argentinian, in New York to sell some of his father's thoroughbreds. Learning that she is daughter to his father's enemy, he withdraws his offer to sell her a horse, and lets her rival have it. Glenda sets off for Buenos Aires to square accounts with him, touring the night-clubs incidentally with a gigolo. However, romance blooms again, and she visits his father's ranch under an assumed name. Together they find Don Diego's favourite thoroughbred has been trained for flat racing instead of jumping. Glenda is ordered off the ranch when her identity becomes known, but she and Ricardo enter the horse in a handicap, with a thrilling win, and at last Don Diego agrees to their marriage.*

" Circonstances Attenuantes " is not, as I say, one of the classic French pictures, but it is so refreshing to watch again the crisp French acting, and to savour the sharp spice of French wit, that few people are likely to be exigent about it. Besides the great Michel Simon—and M. Simon is one of the few actors whom I would advisedly call great—the cast includes Suzanne Dantes (from " Kermesse Héroïque ") and the unique Arletty. Jean Boyer has directed the whole thing with a feathery touch, and there is one of those very French theme-songs that enchant the cosmopolitans—or did, in days gone by.

If you like honest, home-made comedy, there is the new George Formby film, " SPARE A COPPER," at the New Gallery. Our George (with ukulele, naturally) appears as a War Reserve constable who misdirects traffic on Merseyside. Little by little it occurs to him, although never a rapid thinker, that someone is trying to blow up England's newest battleship, and something should be done about it. Everyone has his own clear-cut views about the George Formby pictures. Personally, I am an unreliable guide, because I happen to like the lot of them. That sharp-edged North Country voice is as familiar and homely to me as the muddy cobblestones of my native Lancashire. West End picturegoers, though, may be interested to learn how our Lancashire star looks to an American critic. " He is England's version of Harold Lloyd," one of New York's leading papers has discovered, " a simple soul who fumbles his way through life."

THE N.H. MEETING AT CHELTENHAM.

LADY ALEXANDRA METCALFE, *daughter of the late Marquess Curzon of Kedleston,* CAPTAIN M. WARDELL *and* MISS PEGGY HAMILTON.

MRS. LOVEDAY (*left; in a furcoat and cap*) *with the* DUCHESS OF NORFOLK.

LADY HELENA HILTON-GREEN *and* MAJOR MITCHELL *in consultation as the numbers go up.*

The HON. SHEILA DIGBY, *daughter of Lord and Lady Digby, with* MR. Y. FITZHERBERT.

MR. INNES *and the* HON. MRS. INNES. *She was the Hon. Nefertari Bethell.*

The EARL OF HADDINGTON, *with* MRS. JOHN WARD *and* MRS. JOHN DAVIE.

LADY WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE, *wife of Lord Willoughby de Broke, and* CAPTAIN LIONEL CECIL *having a chat in the paddock.*

VISCOUNT COWDRAY *in conversation with* FLIGHT LIEUT. *and* MRS. HOBHOUSE *near the stand.*

Officers and men of the three Fighting Services formed a fair proportion of those who attended the opening day of the NATIONAL HUNT MEETING at CHELTENHAM, and had the pleasure of enjoying a splendid day's racing, as a slight relaxation from their strenuous training.

MADAME TUSSAUD'S WAXWORKS.

By THEODORA BENSON and BETTY ASKWITH.

Authors of " Foreigners; or the World in a Nutshell."

ILLUSTRATED BY TOPOLSKI.

ON arrival at Madame Tussaud's, for once in our lives we did the right thing. We did not do it dramatically or hilariously, but we did mistake several wax figures for real people, and one real person for a waxwork. The official Souvenir and Guide begins with some historical notes; we glanced at them before making our tour. The tale of Madame Tussaud and her Exhibition is exciting. Her uncle started the

Which are of flesh and which of wax?—that is the question. In the Hall at Madame Tussaud's.

well-known family career, and teaching her his art, found that she surpassed him. At his studio in Paris she hobnobbed with Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, Mirabeau and Benjamin Franklin. Her skill endeared her to the Court, and she spent nine brilliant years at Versailles. Prudently recalled by her uncle, she came home in time to see a mob break into his house, demanding effigies of its heroes to carry through the streets. Two days later the Bastille was stormed, and the figures that were presently dragged through the streets had not the fortune to be made of wax.

The Revolution asked for models of its victims, and again and again, with tears upon her face, the young woman was forced to copy mangled heads of her friends. When the Terror began to feed upon itself, they brought her Robespierre's head within an hour of its severance. She was soon imprisoned herself; with Josephine de Beauharnais, who later, as Empress, was friendly to her, till Madame Tussaud left for England, never to return.

Her biography is a useful background to her exhibition. In its light, the first group we see, Louis XVI. with Marie Antoinette and Voltaire presided over by Joan of Arc, seems less inconsequent. Her passion for snapping up such Revolution relics as the key of the Bastille and the guillotine knife is explained. We do not wonder that the little biography of Charles I. (there is a biography of each figure in the Catalogue) shows a royalist bias.

The most charmingly nonsensical exhibit occurs in the first or Grand Hall, beyond the Louis XVI. tableau and beside the wax-work of Madame herself. This is the Sleeping Beauty, poor, widowed little Mme. St. Amaranthe, who was guillotined, when only twenty-two, for pushing off Robespierre's amorous passes. She sleeps for ever young and fair in black velvet, and perpetually her small but clearly defined bosom rises and falls with a slight whirr and click.

The Grand Hall is amusing for its assortment. How fortunate that the Ecclesiastical Group, Calvin and the Bishop of London, Luther and Cardinal Hinsley, Wolsey and the Pope, and General Booth, cannot converse!

We wandered around, seeing many a face to which we had often longed to say a word of rebuke, encouragement or advice: Halifax, Duff Cooper, Sir John Anderson, " Uncle Joe " Stalin, Colonel Beck, his ex-Majesty of Rumania. . . . Perhaps the cosiest nook was Literary Corner, with Sir Walter Scott (modelled from life) looking " brave and lovable " as the Catalogue said, and Rudyard Kipling, looking like Robertson Hare.

As everyone knows, Madame Tussaud's was bombed. The restaurant is closed, the cinema gone. But almost all its glory is there. We missed a few historical tableaux, still to be restored, but the rows of athletes and sportsmen looked as bland and clean-living as ever, the film-stars as debonair. Ranged in splendour, the Kings and Queens of England met us with glassy, majestic stares.

What is the charm of waxworks? For they have charm. It is probably a mixture of the innocent pleasantness of dolls; the historical and psychological interest of real personalities; and a lurking potentiality for horror. Apart from the fact that the Chamber of Horrors itself is always waiting for us at Tussaud's, we know that to be locked in those galleries at night would be unspeakable.

It was not the Revolution which turned Madame's mind to forming the Chamber of Horrors; her uncle's *Cabinet de Cire* had from the start included its *Caverne des Grands Voleurs.* But it was always her principle to include each notoriety who became news: hence this convincingly dingy array of criminals, the forgotten names mingling with those that still ring a bell. We eagerly looked for those of whom we knew: Burke and Hare, who did so much for the medical profession; the Lonely Policeman murderers; the Blazing Car murderer; poor little Crippen.

We did not face the Diorama of Tortures, though, seen from the tail of an eye, the bright landscape full of neat, small models looked naïve and almost gay. We did not look behind a curtain marked " Adults Only." There were none but adults there, only soldiers, for the most part Australian and Canadian. Three Canadians halted before the life-size tableau of the Last of the Treadmills, and one of them, looking from the fainting wretch on the floor to the gaoler ready to flog him, said: " Lordy! I wouldn't be that blighter with a whip." It seemed enlightened to consider that fate the worse of the two.

" Owing to enemy action "—only four tableaux are not carrying on.

In the Chamber of Horrors; or, the Fearless Canadian.

There is a sort of pleasure in considering sensational murderers like Landru and Brides-in-the-Bath Smith. It gave us an enjoyable start to see Smith's actual tin bath. And just beside it was the iron chair in which our fellow creatures roasted Jean Calas in the name of humanity and to the glory of God. We felt the guilt of the world on our heads, and were grateful to Voltaire, smirking cynically up in the Grand Hall, who had championed the family of Calas and put something down for us on the credit side.

However, in England perhaps we do grow more civilised. During the last war the Kaiser's effigy had to be hidden away for safety. Now that of Hitler stands unmolested. But not in the Chamber of Horrors.

Face to face with the naughty past ("Ever so thrilling!"): the Navy and the A.T.S. contemplate Henry VIII. and his wives.

FELIKS TOPOLSKI has found admirable subjects for his pencil and brush at Madame Tussaud's famous Waxworks Exhibition, as the pictures on this page show. Tussaud's suffered damage in a raid on London some little time ago, but soon recovered and carries on. Always up to date, the Exhibition includes a portrait of General Sikorski, the Polish Premier and Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Forces, as well as of other contemporary personalities, but groups recalling the naughty past, such as Henry VIII. and his wives, are always sure of drawing a large crowd of admirers. On our facing page the Hon. Theodora Benson and the Hon. Betty Askwith describe their impressions of Tussaud's in wartime.

DRAWINGS BY TOPOLSKI.

In London, the capital of Poland: a Polish soldier looks at his Premier.

"Madame Tussaud's" was badly wounded—but recovered and carries on.

AN ARTIST VIEWS MADAME TUSSAUD'S IN WARTIME.

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

THE OFFICER ON THE RIGHT—*for being the first Burmese to get a commission in the Fighter Command's Burma Squadron, R.A.F. Squadron-Leader Stanford Tuck, its leader (kneeling, left centre), shot down his 27th German 'plane last week.*

MR. HAROLD JUDD—*for using the Ministry of Supply as a place of entertainment for Hampstead's dust-women.*

LADY MAUREEN STANLEY *and* MISS EVELYN LAYE—*for facing up to a fifteen-course meal from the common potato.*

THE Burma Squadron came into being with a gift of £150,000 from Burma, and its pilots, flying "Hurricanes," have already shot down more than 30 enemy 'planes. The officer on the right is the first Burmese to be granted a commission in the R.A.F., having studied engineering at some of the finest aircraft and aero-engine factories in England.

THE DUST-WOMEN OF HAMPSTEAD had the pleasure of being invited by MR. HAROLD JUDD, Controller of Salvage, to a tea-party at the Ministry of Supply. Some of his guests appear with him in our photograph.

DOREEN SINCLAIR, *ex-model—for portraying as a change from being portrayed.*

LONDON'S newest form of *boîte* is the Potato Bar. Lord Woolton, Minister of Food, suggested and tested various succulent dishes made from this humble vegetable, and fifteen different varieties, including potato tarts, potato flans, and rolls, were on the menu at the first Potato Bar, where LADY MAUREEN STANLEY and MISS EVELYN LAYE went to sample them.

MAURICETTE MELBOURNE—*for whistling, and the B.B.C. came to her.*

DOREEN SINCLAIR, London's most photographed model, is using models herself now, as an artist. The money she earns pays for the clothes she wears as a film-actress at Denham Studios. She is seen painting ELIZABETH HENNINGS, co-actress in the new film, "Pimpernel Smith."

THESE MEMBERS OF THE A.T.S.—*for changing guard as smartly as the Guards' themselves.*

THE A.T.S. girls take their soldiering seriously, and at a training establishment in the South of England they change the guard at the proper hours as smartly as the lads do.

AUSTRALIAN MAURICETTE MELBOURNE was chosen for leading rôle in the Hollywood film of W. H. Hudson's "Green Pastures," not only for beauty and acting ability, but for her wonderful gift for whistling, which attracted the attention of the B.B.C.

THE first woman to get the O.B.E. of the Military Division is ASST. SECTION OFFICER FELICITY HANBURY, W.A.A.F., for distinguished service in operational commands of the R.A.F. She is the widow of Pilot Officer Jock Hanbury, who was killed in 1939. She has just been appointed Public Relations Officer to the W.A.A.F. Directorate.

ASST. SECTION OFFICER FELICITY HANBURY, W.A.A.F.—*for being the first woman to gain the O.B.E., Military Division.*

CAMERA PORTRAIT BY BERTRAM PARK.

SECOND AMERICAN-BORN WOMAN M.P.

MRS. BEATRICE RATHBONE, *who has succeeded her husband, Flight Lieutenant John Rathbone, killed in action, as Conservative Member for Bodmin, is the second American-born woman to enter the House of Commons. She is the fourteenth woman Member in the present Parliament, and will be introduced by the Chief Whip and Mr. A. C. Bossom, an old friend of the Rathbone family, who has many ties with the U.S.A. Mrs. Rathbone is a Bostonian. She was Miss Beatrice Clough, and is the only daughter of Mr. F. Roland Clough. Her marriage took place in 1932, and she has a son and daughter. She took an active part in arranging for the sending of over 1000 children to safety in the New World under the American scheme.*

A ROYAL DUCHESS, NOTABLE AMERICANS, WEDDINGS AND A MASCOT:

When FLORENCE DESMOND *gave autographs at the War Weapons Exhibition held at a London store to encourage war saving, she used a camera from an enemy 'plane as a writing-desk.*

MR. ANTHONY J. DREXELL BIDDLE, JUN., *the United States Minister to Exiled Governments in London, has arrived. He was U.S. Minister to Poland at the time of the invasion, and continued en poste at Angers.*

MR. AVERELL HARRIMAN, *President Roosevelt's personal "expeditor of war aid to Great Britain," has arrived in London. He travelled as far as Lisbon with Mr. Drexell Biddle.*

SENIOR COMMANDANT JEAN KNOX, A.T.S., *has been appointed Inspector of the A.T.S. and will be a member of the Directorate, with a seat on the Council. She is the wife of a Squadron Leader in the R.A.F.*

SUSIE, *a fat goose, was intended as an item on the 1939 Christmas menu of the Harrow A.F.S. station, but her personal charm earned her a reprieve, and she is now official mascot. She has arranged to make a personal appearance at a forthcoming concert.*

MISS JEAN SPENCER THORNTON, *twin daughter of Mr. Spencer Thornton married* MR. RONALD E. WALLACE, *the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars, eldest son of Major Wallace, of Ashford Manor, Ludlow, at St. Paul's, Knightsbridge.*

A WIDE FIELD OF WARTIME SUBJECTS.

LADY MARY BERRY, FLIGHT LIEUT. *the* HON. LANGTON *and* MRS. ILIFFE *and* LIEUT. MICHAEL RENSHAW *(l. to r.) at the wedding of Lord Huntly and the Hon. Pamela Berry.*

CORPORAL HAROLD SIMS, M.M., *decorated at a recent Investiture, is the first American serving with the British to win an award in this war. He received his M.M. for gallantry at Dunkirk.*

LORD KEMSLEY, *father of Lord Huntly's bride, and* MRS. DOUGLAS GORDON, *mother of Lord Huntly.*

The marriage of the MARQUESS OF HUNTLY, *the Gordon Highlanders, to the* HON. PAMELA BERRY, *only daughter of Lord Kemsley, took place at St. Mary's, Farnham Royal.*

SEC. LIEUT. J. M. HUNGERFORD POLLEN, *R.A., son of Lieut.-Commander J. F. H. Pollen, R.N., is engaged to* MISS ANGELA MARY ORIANA RUSSI, *elder daughter of Captain F. J. Russi, M.C.*

When the DUCHESS OF KENT *inspected gifts from Australia for British children, Mrs. M. Giles presented baby* ANGELA, *who burst into shy tears. The Duchess comforted her by an invitation to "look into my bag."*

THE ART OF MISUSING EGGS !

A scene of pity and terror: six eggs, praying, doomed and forlorn, watch their comrade frying.

Eggs endowed with personality by Nina
pins and gl

An unfortunate love-affair; she is set on a pinnacle, and he has fallen down.

NEW-LAID EGGS are among the delicacies of which we have lately dreamt more often than enjoyed, so these amusing portrait - groups of Nina Leen's personality-eggs will amuse and charm. She has a gift for endowing each egg with a different character, and groups them in conversation-piece style to provide subjects for the camera-artist. It should be added that Miss Leen carries on her art in the U.S.A., but in any case, if you could get the eggs, there would be no harm in your trying your hand at the game, too, for a painted face doesn't indicate a bad egg in the larder any more than it does in real life!

Nina Leen at work on the e

…n's skill ; wool, plasticine, swansdown, …are used.

NINA LEEN LOOTS THE LARDER.

Of unsound mind? An egg, his hair standing on end, views a comrade who has committed felo de se.

…giving them eyebrows, noses, mouths, hair, …expressive eyes.

A little boy and girl are at play with their boat in a spacious pan; later, alas, it is possible that they may be boiled in that very pot.

APPLICANTS FOR HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT, WITH (at back, l. to r.) the HON. MRS. JACK CRAWSHAY, MISS DOROTHY DICKSON, and LADY ELEANOR SMITH.

ON DUTY FOR "REFUGEES OF ENGLAND" AND AIR-RAID RELIEF.

PHOTOGRAPHS B

The HON. MRS. JACK CRAWSHAY (left), CHAIRMAN OF "REFUGEES OF ENGLAND," with LADY ELEANOR SMITH AMONG THE DUSTBINS WHICH WAIT FOR DISTRIBUTION.

"Refugees of England," London, under the chairmanship of the Hon. Mrs. Jack Crawshay, daughter of the President, Lord Tyrrell of Avon, functions as a clearing-house for money raised in America by "Refugees of England," U.S.A., whose chairman is Lady Abingdon. The greater part of its work is done on behalf of foreign refugees, but clothing, furniture, and so on are distributed to air-raid victims, as these pictures show. The Committee's multitudinous activities include housing and training of French cadets, helping refugees in billets with money, clothes, shoes, medical and dental attention, education of children, organisation of concerts and dramatic entertainments by the Federate Players in shelters and halls, and helping the London Hostels Association for "lonely husbands," which is backed by the Ministry of Health. Mrs. Crawshay works very hard in this excellent cause, and so does Miss Dorothy Dickson, who is on the energetic committee.

'IL BEATON.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CECIL BEATON

AFTER THE RAID.

Wife of the Minister of Agriculture, MRS. ROBERT HUDSON *is one of those who devote their services in the tragic areas where homes are bombed and belongings lost. This scene in the East End is typical of many other depôts where hundreds of articles of clothing and other comforts and necessities are distributed to homeless people. Mrs. Robert Hudson, who is a member of the Women's Voluntary Services, is an American by birth.*

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

THE "European spring" of Miss Clare Boothe's title is the fateful spring of 1940, and her subject the international situation before and during the onslaught of the German armies on their Western neighbours. Before me as I write is a detail of Paul Veronese's picture "The Rape of Europa"—a lovely thing, sumptuous, luxurious, grand: the heroine of the episode looks slightly put out, but no more, by the fate that is so soon to overtake her. The Rape of Europe that Miss Boothe describes is a very different affair, and there is little in it to charm the senses or delight the mind.

Miss Boothe left America for Naples on Feb. 24. The amenities of the "phoney war" were still undisturbed: a friend on the boat was bound for Paris to inspect the "collections" of the *couturières*—"the French spirit, indomitable," she observed, adding, "of course, they're mostly for the American buyers now. . . . You don't know how the war has hit clothes." With this frame of mind Miss Boothe had less than no sympathy. Her object was to find out whether "democracy in Europe and the awful peril it was in really mattered to America or not." At the outset she was inclined to think it did, at the end she thought it mattered more than anything, and her book has been written to put this view before the English-speaking world with all the conviction she can command.

Our Readers, Please Note

AS most of our readers must by this time be fully aware, the Publishing Houses of Britain are passing through difficult times. Coupled with a curtailment of paper supplies owing to shipping difficulties, all production costs have been greatly increased.

This being the case, the Proprietors of *The Sketch*, following the example of many others, with greatest reluctance have been compelled to raise the price of this journal from 1s., as hitherto, to 1s. 3d. per copy.

Owing also to the urgency of the paper-supply problem, waste must be entirely eliminated. For this reason your newsagent only receives such copies for sale as are needed to fill his exact requirements. Therefore, you should not rely upon a casual purchase of *The Sketch*, but should place a definite order at once.

Starting with the issue of April 2, the price of *The Sketch* will henceforth be 1s. 3d. per copy.

THE EDITOR.

A Democratic Vice.

Miss Boothe is a playwright of distinction, and her *milieu* is the world of art where it touches the allied world of rich cosmopolitans—the latter still enjoying, in the spring of 1940, their final fling in the capitals of Europe. But though she makes straight for the Ritz, or its nearest equivalent, and hobnobs with international playboys, she is not a playboy herself: she is extremely serious, often to the point of resenting, sometimes a little unfairly, levity in others. Not that she is averse from humour herself. But she likes her irony a little underlined. The mild, understated irony of our countrymen she sometimes mistakes for self-complacency. Self-complacency — which to her always spells unawareness of danger—is her bugbear; immediate action is what she calls for, and the capacity for immediate action, among the countries threatened by Germany last spring, was precisely what she did not find. In some ways a sophisticated and acute, in other ways she is rather a naïve, observer. She seems surprised that, when in Rome, she could not get the people she met in drawing-rooms to talk openly about the political situation. To Count Ciano's question: "What shall we talk about?" she answered—

"Oh, anything, just as long as we are frank. I'm very, very tired of not being able freely to speak my mind in Rome. It's a democratic vice, of course, but it's the last one I would ever be able to rid myself of."

He said: "Well, now you can shoot the works at me." Ciano was very proud of the American slang he knew. . . .

STANLEY SPENCER *contributes, with two others, this amusing and excellent "Self Portrait," with palette, to the Leger Gallery's Exhibition of Contemporary Art. His favourite subjects are vast canvases of busy figures, such as the famous "Resurrection" at the Tate Gallery, and he has done a great deal of mural decoration on these lines. Among the other painters showing at the Leger are Augustus John, Richard Sickert, Vivian Pitchforth, Frances Hodgkins, and Anthony Devas.*

Imperfect Sympathies.

One must be rather raw to expect any diplomat to give a direct answer to a direct question. Later in her travels, Miss Boothe became much more adept at finding out what she wanted to know. In Paris, particularly, she gleaned a quantity of information, much of it rather painful to those of us who believe that at least as much solidarity can exist between democrats as between totalitarians. When she told a Frenchwoman that American public opinion was largely isolationist "because we don't quite know what France's war-aims are," the Frenchwoman, one is perhaps not surprised to record, said something very rude about America. The French were very rude about us, too, during "the Battle of the Bulge," and after; they bitterly condemned the Belgians; they declared that they had been betrayed. And, to provide the reverse of the medal, we were not very appreciative of them. . . .

The Personal Element.

All this makes melancholy reading, despite the unfailing liveliness of Miss Boothe's writing. If, as she says, the truth of what happened may never be known, is there any purpose in hotting up all this old bad blood, even with a hand as dextrous as Miss Boothe's? Her book is infinitely readable, as bright as the best journalism and with real literary quality. Some of the conversations she records—her talk with the philosophic Dutch lady, for instance, at The Hague the night before the German invasion, or the interchange, overheard in the train, between the two British officers returned from Dunkirk — are unforgettable. She had a front seat at the dreadful pageant, and the privilege of meeting many of its chief actors, and she made the most of her opportunities. She has wit and nimbleness of mind and the feminine trait, at once irritating and vitalising, of making the same phenomenon (*e.g.*, British phlegm) the occasion of approval in one mood and disapproval in another. She has a burning passion for Democracy, and the gift of pleading its cause with eloquence (in the last chapter, with its numberless rhetorical questions, the eloquence lasts perhaps too long). But her extreme susceptibility to the personal element in every issue robs her book of some of its value to those who would like to have these momentous happenings presented in a "dry light."

A Question of Nationality.

My understanding, if not my enjoyment, of "No Truce With Time" was somewhat interfered with by the wrapper's description of the hero as an American. Surely the publisher must know, I thought. But I could find in the novel itself no reference to Barclay Ashe's Transatlantic origin, and when he referred to his cricketing days, I was more than ever puzzled. Whatever the wrapper may say, I am afraid there is no doubt that he is an Englishman: a pity, because most readers will agree that he did not behave very well.

A rich, unattached young man of twenty-three, on business bent, he descended on the small British West Indian island of El Santo, and became for Mary Montague, wife of its most prominent citizen, the emblem of love. Mary was approaching thirty; her husband, middle-aged and tormented by asthma, a heavy drinker, though not a drunkard, was a popular figure in the colony, but, except financially,

[Continued overleaf.

Continued.]
he was not much comfort to his wife. She fell head over ears in love with Barclay, and soon they were in the midst of an intrigue. With so many watchful eyes all round her, meetings were difficult to arrange, but with the rashness such a position produces, Mary went off to Barbados, a friend accompanying her to give the expedition the colour of respectability. Barclay met her there, and they enjoyed several days of bliss.

A Familiar Situation. Mary's situation—the situation of an older woman trying desperately to hold the love of a young man—is a very old one, and skilfully handled, cannot fail to be effective. Mr. Alec Waugh handles it with the utmost skill. One or two points are slurred over or not given their full weight; we are told, for instance, that Gerald was a likeable man, and that Mary was fond of him, but I do not feel that this was so. Again, Barclay's behaviour is not quite easy to understand. Granted the truth of the saying "All's fair in love and war," one still cannot acquit him of great heartlessness and some lack of ordinary intelligence in keeping up the affair with Mary while he was making love to the American débutante; moreover, it seems out of character, for he was neither unamiable nor unintelligent. On the other hand, Mr. Waugh's analysis of the stages in Mary's emotional development, the series of moods which brought her to desperation, is masterly. She had no one to confide in; she had to consume her own smoke; she was a prey to auto-suggestion. Mr. Waugh traces the course of her emotional disintegration sometimes directly, sometimes by the clever device of illustrating it from the books she read: "Madame Bovary" and "Anna Karenina," studies of women whose plight resembled hers, are succeeded by detective stories, and accounts of famous murder trials. The murder, when it comes, is convincingly done, and the one flaw in the plan, the new lock on the garage door, a subtle, imaginative stroke—as is also, in a different vein, the unlucky determination of the Coroner to make things as easy as possible for her. But the triumph of the book is undoubtedly the portrayal of the growing divorce between Mary's mind and reality—*quem deus vult perdere, prius dementat*—the succession of baseless, mushroom moods which successively convince the unhappy woman that each step she takes is the only possible one: first, that she will not be found out, then that she will be found out; then that suicide is the only course; then that suicide is quite unnecessary. . . It is all most painful, but it is exceedingly well done.

A New Mixture. "Adventures of Gilead Skaggs" is a new mixture—a Wild West story told by a child. Gilead Skaggs is, moreover, a master of gangster's prose; he could give some hints to Peter Cheyney. This, however, he occasionally diversifies with little-boy talk—*e.g.*, "Watching that horse run was like setting down and listening to the awfullest prettiest music in the world." The story itself is simple. Gilead's father is arrested in the train that is taking them both to San Francisco; kind-hearted fellow-passengers take pity on the boy and give him a home on their ranch. Hearing (untruly) that his father is a murderer, he is seized by a neurotic fear that murder may be hereditary; and to avoid doing his benefactors a fatal injury, he leaves them, and throws in his lot with two friendly Redskins. Afterwards his father returns to the story, having suffered a change of heart, as a revivalist and hell-fire preacher. Mr. Baum's story might be criticised as a soft drink until Tom Hands appears: then the bullets start flying. There is some entertaining information (I do not know how accurate) about Red Indian "medicine" and spirit-worship, and Gilead coins not a few good phrases. Otherwise the book is not outstanding, and it is written from so many different angles—by a child writing as a child, a child writing as a man, a man writing as a child, a man writing as a man—that the reader is never quite certain by whom he is being addressed.

Here are a few senior officers of the Air Staff of Group "X," ROYAL AIR FORCE. *"X" equalling, of course, not the unknown, but the unnamed, for purposes of censorship. Group Captain Harcourt-Smith is the head of these able and responsible officers.* (CARICATURES BY FRED MAY.)

A Resourceful Heroine. If Lord Bacon had visited the famous nursery gardens at Charteris Royal, he might have hesitated to call gardening the purest of human pleasures; and contemporary lovers of horticulture will be disturbed to realise the infamy that can lurk behind a delphinium. Readers of detective fiction will scarcely be surprised to find that a gang of villains abduct the heroine; but if they rashly conclude that they can guess the rest of the book, they have several surprises in store for them. Mr. Phillips has had considerable experience in setting puzzles, and his skill does not fail him now. He not only invents a heroine well furnished with the charm indispensable for her rôle, but this heroine can invent a code message in twenty minutes, under conditions which would have rendered anyone except a heroine nearly incapable of signing her name; and, moreover, she can swallow a sheet of paper. Mr. Phillips has constructed a tale full of ingenuity and thrills, the rival forces are well led, and vie with each other in cunning and resourcefulness, and only a truly marvellous organisation tips the balance of success.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

European Spring. By Clare Boothe. (*Hamish Hamilton*; 10s. 6d.)
No Truce With Time. By Alec Waugh. (*Cassell*; 7s. 6d.)
Adventures of Gilead Skaggs. By James E. Baum. (*Methuen*; 8s.)
Charteris Royal. By Hubert Phillips. (*Gollancz*; 7s. 6d.)

A NEW PLATE IN FULL COLOUR BY MR. DAVID WRIGHT is published in this number of "The Sketch"; and in our following issue, dated April 2, we are giving a further plate of the series.

Axel Heyst (FREDRIC MARCH), *who prides himself on his detachment from all human passions, befriends Alma* (BETTY FIELD), *and takes her to his island retreat.*

Axel, who has always kept aloof from all emotion, finds his heart stirred with anxiety for Alma.

The rascally Mr. Schomberg (SIG RUMANN; *right) tells Ricardo* (JEROME COWAN) *that Heyst has a hoard of gold buried on his island.*

BETTY FIELD *as Alma, of the Makanoff Girls' Orchestra. Schomberg, whose advances she has turned down, buys her contract from Makanoff.*

The philosopher becomes a man of action! Heyst kills Mr. Jones (SIR CEDRIC HARDWICKE), *would-be thief and murderer, after Betty has stabbed his accomplice, Ricardo.*

Human emotion at last admitted! Axel Heyst realises that he cares deeply for Alma, and that he must abandon detachment.

Ricardo discovers Alma on the island and questions her brutally about the rumoured hoard of gold concealed by Heyst. Schomberg has told him a fable about this.

CONRAD'S "VICTORY." AS A SCREEN THRILLER.

"VICTORY," the screen play by John L. Balderston, based on the novel by Joseph Conrad, is the new Paramount picture due at the Plaza on March 28. The hero, Heyst, is a philosopher who lives on the island of Sanburan, proud of his detachment from all human emotion. He disdains to clear his name when his partner absconds with the last funds of the bankrupt business, and when the Makanoff Orchestra girl, Alma, enlists his aid to escape from Schomberg, he is astonished at himself for helping her. He takes her to his island; but Schomberg, determined on revenge, dispatches the villains, Mr. Jones, Ricardo and Pedro, primed with false stories of buried gold. Their advent means grave danger for Heyst and Alma, and in avoiding it, Heyst finds he has ceased to be a philosopher and is a man of action who has killed his enemy to save the woman he loves. Alma has achieved Victory by humanising him.

SIR CEDRIC HARDWICKE *as the unspeakable Mr. Jones, who invades Heyst's island with intent to rob and murder.*

GINGER ROGERS IN HER "OSCAR"-WINNING PICTURE, "KITTY FOYLE."

GINGER ROGERS *as Kitty Foyle, American "white-collar" or business girl, whose moving story is told in the new film "first-person-singular" technique.*

Kitty meets Wyn (DENNIS MORGAN) *when she rushes in, thinking her father* (ERNEST COSSART) *has set his wastepaper basket on fire.*

Kitty, now the wife of Wyn, receives a cool welcome from Mrs. Strafford (GLADYS COOPER).

Kitty's big scene: the young bride tells the assembled Strafford family that she cannot be moulded and cut to their snobbish pattern.

After her marriage has crashed, Kitty resumes her successful career in the New York beauty business.

The finale. Kitty decides that she must cut out all thoughts of Wyn, her ex-husband, and leaves her apartment to marry Mark, the devoted doctor.

"KITTY FOYLE" has won Ginger Rogers the 1940 "Oscar." Kitty gets a start in a magazine office, falls in love with the boss, Wyn Strafford, but criticises his slack business methods. The magazine fails, and she goes to New York, where she makes her way and meets medical student Mark. Wyn reappears, she marries him, but the marriage is dissolved. Too late, she finds she is to have a child, but it dies. After five years, she meets Wyn's wife and son; gives Wyn's ring to the child as a secret sign, and decides to marry Mark.

THE "OSCAR" SMILE BY GINGER ROGERS AND JAMES STEWART.

GINGER ROGERS *and* JAMES STEWART *face the camera with their faces wreathed in the "Oscar" smile, for they are the winners of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awards for the best acting of 1940—a prize known as the "Oscar"—and are holding their trophies. Ginger received hers for her performance as Kitty Foyle, and James Stewart for his work in "The Philadelphia Story," in which he played "Mike," Macaulay Connor, the young reporter. When Miss Rogers was called on to the stage to receive her award she burst into tears.*

CITY NOTES.

OUR STROLLER IN THROGMORTON STREET.

"YOU must have got into the shelter belonging to the Stock Exchange Managers and Committee," said the broker. "What did you do?"

"I withdrew hastily in good order," Our Stroller replied. "It looked unlike any public shelter that I 've seen. There were other shelters with large initial letters outside, and I slipped into one of those. Nobody said anything to me, and I heard several interesting conversations about your markets."

"I thought that most of the chaps did cross-words. The Stock Exchange Managers and Trustees don't even provide us with games. I think we might at least have darts in return for our subscriptions. They charge me thirty guineas a year——"

"Some fellows pay a hundred guineas a year. They get mighty little back in return for it. If I can make enough in a week to pay for my meat ration, I consider myself lucky. If we do happen to get a corpse or two——"

"Say Deceased Account," his partner begged. "It sounds less crude."

"All right," agreed the broker. "I 'll say that if you are sufficiently fortunate to be favoured with instructions to sell securities for executors of a deceased account or two, you will probably pay your expenses in that week——"

"We all find the same thing," said a jobber in the Stock Exchange Miscellaneous Market, to which our little party had drifted. "The stock you want does not come in, and the stock you 've got on the book is just what nobody asks for."

"That is so," a fellow-dealer corroborated. "But you can't be surprised at the public feeling puzzled as to whether they should buy; or sell; or stay put."

"When you 've held, as permanent investments, banking shares, or insurance, or shipping, for years past, you feel reluctant to part from them. You come to take a sort of personal interest in the show, don't you?"

"Where does all the money come from that has sent up the price of War Loan?"

"I expect the Government would like to know the answer to that. Sir Kingsley Wood probably thinks that part of it might have gone into the national borrowing for war purposes."

"There 's been a certain amount of speculation——"

"That doesn't explain the whole of the gilt-edged rise. I think the support has come largely from buyers who look at the War Loan's higher yield, and argue that they had previously put up all they could afford to subscribe to the war effort."

"Not much of an argument really; but still, there you are. It may apply to the rise in Industrials as well."

"They 're a problem, too, because you don't know how companies will be affected by this consolidation-of-industry plan."

"Surely a majority of companies are already doing Government work in some shape or other? Even those concerns that seem to have no connection with the war, you are quite likely to find employed on munitions, or something like that."

"The shipbuilding concerns can't help making money now they 're under Admiralty control. Swan Hunters look cheap to me. Pay you $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. or more. John Brown is another good show. The shares give you about $5\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. tax free; that 's equal to 9 per cent. gross."

"Why not Vickers? There 's a $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. yield on them at to-day's price. A bit more, actually."

"People will buy these things, and yet refuse to look at 8 to 15 per cent. on Home Railway stocks. I often wonder why."

"For one thing," said a broker, adjusting a flower in his jacket, "Home Rails have got a sulky Press."

"What 's that?" asked Our Stroller.

"It 's a Stock Exchange phrase for newspapers that can't see any good in a particular market. All the papers were wrong last month over their dividend forecasts, and they haven't recovered from their annoyance with the Railways for treating the stockholders so well."

Our Stroller laughed.

"You hear queer things in the Stock Exchange," he said to his broker. "That 's one reason why I like coming in here: you certainly get unusual angles of view."

"Sometimes right; sometimes wrong," the broker concurred. "Look at our poor old Yankee Market: all that is left of it. The glory has departed."

"Sure enough. I thought my Nickels would buck up when Roosevelt said he had plenty of tin, but not too much nickel. Does no one take any active interest in Nickels, or Canadas, or Americans?"

"Not a soul. How can they? You are not allowed to buy stock from New York. Sell it, if you like; but what 's the use of a one-way market to us in London?"

Our Stroller shook his head in melancholy comprehension.

"Your markets are not what they used to be," he sympathised.

"We have a fine and very efficient Consol Market," said the broker. "The popular Industrials you can always deal in at close prices. In Iron and Steel shares there are jobbers who will generally stand up to you, and take you on in reasonable amounts——"

"And Mining shares?"

"A few firms are always business. But in many markets there isn't enough trade for the system of brokers and jobbers to operate efficiently."

"Of course, the Government is mopping up huge sums of public capital."

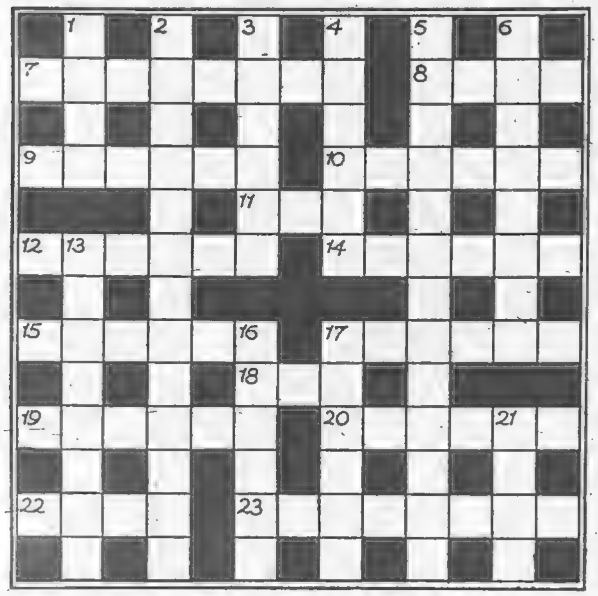
"As it should do. The more it gets, the quicker we 'll end the war. Yet you 've always got to have a market——"

"'There 'll always be an England,'" hummed Our Stroller; "and there 'll always——"

"Better come quietly with me, Sir," said a Stock Exchange waiter. "Look: there 's the nearest door. Quick, Sir!"

Friday, March 21, 1941.

"THE SKETCH" CROSS-WORD.



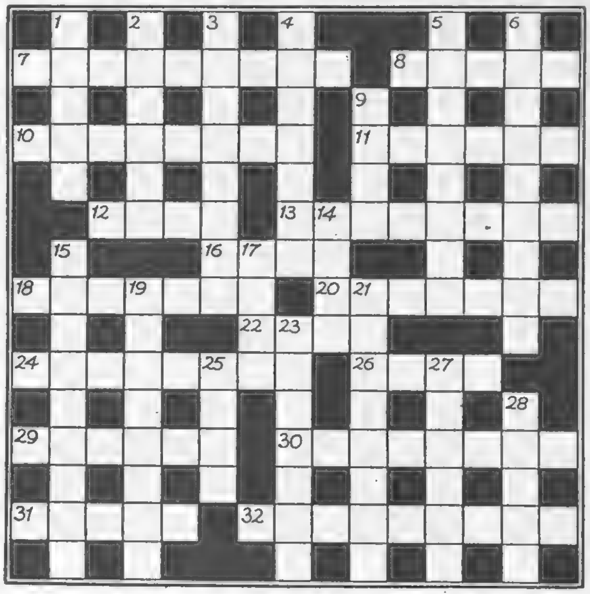
ACROSS.

7. A form of equestrian exercise that should appeal to the modern society woman (8).
8. An Indian judge might use such language to a native after listening to his defence (4).
9. See 5 Down.
10. Everything (two words; 3, 3).
11. It will be found in 4 Down (3).
12. The sort of walk they have in the Navy perhaps? (6).
14. This is simply frightful! (6).
15. Be careful now! You need to reflect here (6).
17. Would a song of this kind have a special appeal for cricketers? (6).
18. Name of the name, so to speak! (3).
19. No; this is not a performing seal in a circus! (6).
20. Well, well! this brings it all back, as it were! (6).
22. The chance for the solver here is one in a thousand. (Try it for yourself) (4).
23. "Dire spin" (anag.) (8).

DOWN.

1. Father adds nothing to the decorative effect here (4).
2. It is absolutely necessary to do so in cricket if you want to play the game (four words; 4, 4, 3, 2).
3. Take the end of 12 Across out, add it to this, and the result is something very popular just now with the B.E.F. (6).
4. This should be easy, as the solution is right under your nose (6).
5. A famous song, of which the reverse of a 9 Across provides a record (two words; 4, 9).
6. "Simon had" (anag.) (8).
13. "In the Gloaming"—or its equivalent here (8).
16. Can this be to tell a story about a dog with a new ending? (6).
17. A tender action of which the motive is apparent in itself (6).
21. This does not seem to be a period during which strong action is indicated (4).

"THE SKETCH" DIFFICULT CROSS-WORD.



ACROSS.

1. A novelist of ripe style (9).
8. Colour of the bedchamber? (5).
10. Make believe (8).
11. Beat soundly (6).
12. Coin with a feminine sound (4).
13. Spice ale might become preeminent (8).
16. This stream is not necessarily in North Wales (4).
18. Bold front with a bit of a fuss at the end (7).
20. View that may not be a pleasing one (7).
22. Not a note—or *is* it? (4).
24. Starts in fine fettle, but is unceremonious (8).
26. Are its townspeople of pleasing address? (4).
29. Wool swindle? (6).
30. Is this report issued through the bed-post? (8).
31. The darling of one hundred years ago (5).
32. Coming according to the Scot (9).

DOWN.

1. That of a certain course is in the consumption (5).
2. In the eye of Milton's Eve (6).
3. Up the pole (8).
4. A queen who went to the dogs, but not of her own free will (7).
5. Rain came differently across the ocean (8).
6. He does not go in for house-breaking, but for illegal entering (9).
9. Hold tight and cut away (4).
14. May provide an opening for a tanner (4).
15. When such learned men meet, I suppose disputes often occur (9).
17. Every nationality claims this island when it 's mentioned (4).
19. If you offer it, don't expect a ready acceptance (8).
21. Writer to run away with the wife of Ulysses (8).
23. You 'll disturb a blonde by addressing her in this fashion (two words; 3, 4).
25. When to assemble is becoming (4).
27. Hands do this work: the hands start this work, but I never heard of such hands doing it (6).
28. According to inside information, this horse is none too fit (5).

PHOTOGRAPH BY CECIL BEATON.

WELLS' PARLOURMAID HEROINE.

PHYLLIS CALVERT *plays Ann, the heroine of Wells' famous story, "Kipps," in the screen version, with Michael Redgrave in the title-rôle. Ann, it will be remembered, is Kipps's childhood's sweetheart, and when they meet again she is a domestic servant in his rich fiancée's house. He jilts the society girl, Helen, and elopes with the parlourmaid, Ann.*

BLAZES AT PEN-Y-BWLCH.*

By K. F. TEGART. *Author of "Long Vacation" and "Castle Bran."*

I HAPPENED to be spending a few days with my Aunt Bridget when they held the meeting to decide who should form the corps of fire-watchers in Pen-y-Bwlch. Though it was fully realised by all present that neither the school-house, the Parish Hall, which also serves as the First Aid Post, nor even the cart-bridge over the brook were in themselves of sufficient importance to justify a raiding-party being sent from the Channel ports, yet it was pointed out by Mr. Williams-the-school that raiders had been known to pass over Pen-y-Bwlch on more than one occasion during the summer, on their way, presumably, to some more important target. Mrs. Evans-the-shop said that one day they might well make a mistake in their reckoning with the mist and all now. The Colonel said the only motto nowadays was Be Prepared. Be Prepared. It was well known that half the success of an attack depended on the element of surprise. Pen-y-Bwlch must make up its mind not to be taken by surprise.

Just because it had been fortunate enough to escape direct attack from the air hitherto that did not by any means ensure that it would remain immune till the end of the war. We must consider ourselves in the firing-line and always be On the Look-Out. Be Prepared. The Vicar said "Hear, hear." Miss Middleton said she quite, quite agreed. The best form of attack was defence, wasn't it?—or—oh, no, how silly of her, of course, it was the other way round. Ha, ha! But still, the principle was the same, and she could only say again that she quite, quite agreed. The sense of the meeting seemed unanimous then, said Aunt Bridget. Now, it was her opinion that this duty of fire-watching could very well be taken on by the women of the place. Most of the men were doing valuable work in the daytime and could hardly be expected to give up their nights as well. The few men who were not usefully employed in the daytime—and here she eyed the Colonel and my Uncle Nigel—were, at any rate, doing their bit in the Home Guard, and one couldn't very well expect them to add to their nights on duty.

No. Now, she thought, was the opportunity for the women of Pen-y-Bwlch to show they were made of the same stuff as the men. At this point, Uncle Nigel, a brother of Aunt Bridget's who owns Llanwyn House and who retired from the Navy after the Four Years War in order to rest body and mind and get a bit of shootin' and travellin' (and incidentally a bit of eatin' and drinkin' and love-makin'), gave a hoarse chuckle and turned to the Colonel. Fortunately Aunt Bridget was able to catch his eye and check an aside which one could see trembling on his lips. Uncle Nigel's asides are not only always perfectly audible but usually of a rather regrettable nature.

As soon as Aunt Bridget was sure that her glassy stare had done its work, she continued: "Again, I think it should be the women who are not working hard in the daytime who should give up their nights. Now, we all know that Mrs. Evans is busy with the shop during the day, and the farmers' wives have more than they can manage with the extra work, but that still leaves myself and Miss Middleton and Mrs. Williams-the-school, and my maids will take it in turn to do one night a week, and so can one of your maids, Nigel. And then, of course, there 's Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton. I asked her to come to the meeting this morning and she said she would. Perhaps she will still turn up."

At the mention of Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton's name the men at the meeting, including the Vicar, who is a bachelor, but excluding Mr. Williams-the-school, who is chapel and married and liable to be the first to spot the trail of the scarlet woman, perked up and adjusted their ties or smoothed their hair.

Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton has been something of an excitement in our village. At the outbreak of war she took over the old Hall, which had stood empty for years. Though nobody else was able to get a brick or piece of timber for love or money, she managed to have the house completely repaired and redecorated and filled it with her furniture from London. When the billeting scheme came into operation she was given a doctor's certificate to say that her health would not allow her to take in billetees. Her health, it turned out, was only just good enough to allow her to entertain her friends who came on leave or for a change from London. It must have improved in the air of Pen-y-Bwlch, for she entertained a considerable amount as time went on, and Aunt Bridget, as billeting officer, had a few words about it with Dr. Manfield, but to no effect. Dr. Manfield has always preferred brunettes. Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton's official entertainment of the local residents had so far only run to one sherry party, but Uncle Nigel, the Colonel, the Vicar, and Dr. Manfield often dropped in about cocktail time to make sure she wasn't lonely. Indeed, I have a suspicion that Uncle Nigel told her he was lonely himself, and was thus able to drop in for dinner occasionally as well.

She arrived at the meeting by car, as she lives nearly a quarter of a mile away, and told Aunt Bridget that she was terribly sorry and did hope she wasn't too, too late. Aunt Bridget replied that she wasn't too, too late to hear the first result of the meeting, anyway. Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton looked round at us all with her large hazel eyes. She is very slim, with dark hair, and lips and nails tinted a becoming cherry-red. Her voice is low and languid, but indeed you wonder how that delicate, willowy body can conjure up enough energy to produce a voice at all. She said sweetly and huskily that she did so hope she would be able to help in some way. Yes, said Aunt Bridget firmly, she could help by acting for one night a week as fire-watcher for the village. Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton looked startled and said "Oh!" Aunt Bridget then went on to discuss the best points of vantage from which the fire-watching should take place, arranged for the Colonel to drive fifteen miles into Llanwen to buy a stirrup-pump, and for Uncle Nigel to have buckets of sand placed in strategic positions outside Evans' shop, the White Lion and the Stag and Hounds, and for Mr. Williams-the-school to add to his duties as A.R.P. warden the further duty of chief fireman. At a given signal on a whistle a number of stout lads were to muster and proceed to the scene of the fire with the water-cart, which should be left up the Ram Lane beyond the Hall.

Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton then surprised everyone by remarking that if she were allowed to fire-watch from her own home she wouldn't mind undertaking *two* nights a week. She had a stirrup-pump and buckets of water already placed in readiness.

"That 's the spirit," said the Colonel; "very gallant indeed, very gallant."

Miss Middleton had already volunteered to undertake two nights' duty a week, but as she is forty-five and wears spectacles her gallantry, naturally, isn't so obvious.

Yes, that would be all right," said Aunt Bridget; "you have a flat roof at the Hall and a good view of the whole village. The

[Continued overleaf.

* *All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*

KATHARINE HEPBURN IN THE SWIM.

KATHARINE HEPBURN *returned triumphantly to the screen as Tracy Lord, heroine of M.-G.-M.'s film version of* "THE PHILADELPHIA STORY," *the successful stage play in which she appeared in New York for fifty-two weeks. It began its run at the Empire on February 28 and has been making a big hit. The swimming-pool sequence plays an important part in the story. Tracy takes a moonlight dip which results in a dramatic change of her matrimonial plans.*

Continued.]

rest of us had better stick to the school-house on our own nights, I suppose."

Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton didn't invite them to alter their arrangements, and shortly afterwards the meeting broke up, though not before Uncle Nigel had broadcast something about setting an incendiary bomb to catch an incendiary bomb, and Mr. Williams had glowered at Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton's nails and remarked darkly that indeed there was worse things to be on the look-out for than bombs. Bad the state of Society was, indeed, now, rotten. Yes, indeed, rotten.

I left Pen-y-Bwlch shortly afterwards, and before I returned the Pen-y-Bwlch fire-fighting squad had occasion to show its mettle. It was not a bomb which called it into action, but that, after all, its members did not know at the time, and the promptness and skill with which they carried out their duties have given Pen-y-Bwlch inhabitants confidence that they will be able to deal with any enemy-inspired outbreak of incendiarism in the village.

I heard Uncle Nigel's version of the incident, and also Mr. Williams-the-school's, and between them I can reconstruct the scene.

Apparently Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton decided to do her fire-watching from the Hall terrace. It was her habit to send the maids and chauffeuse to bed and to sit inside the French windows of the dining-room, the lights of the room, of course, being extinguished. Watching through the long night, unable to see to read or sew, might seem an exhausting business for a delicate woman, but Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton rarely kept vigil alone. If there were no male guest staying at the Hall to support the brave little creature in her duties, either the Colonel or Uncle Nigel stepped into the breach. A tray of well-chosen drinks and some cold food helped them to keep up their strength, and Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton had a small oil-stove set just outside on the terrace, on which she cooked bacon and eggs or an omelette for her guest. Also-rans on the terrace were some buckets of water, the stirrup-pump, and a packing-case filled with sand.

Before long the inhabitants of Pen-y-Bwlch noticed that a light was always visible from the Hall on the nights when their safety was, so to speak, in Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton's hands. The flame of a candle, as Sir James Jeans tells us, is visible at a distance of six miles, and the flame of the oil-stove showed up as a beacon in the black-out of Pen-y-Bwlch. Complaints were made to Mr. Williams-the-school.

"Signalling, she is, to those old Germans, I shouldn't wonder."

"Every Wednesday and Saturday it happens, Mr. Williams, indeed. There 's wrong, now. You ought to warn her."

Mr. Williams watched the following Wednesday, and with his own eyes confirmed the report as true, so summoning Dai Evans, as assistant warden, to accompany him, he proceeded up the hill to the Hall. It was then well after midnight and, as the distant drone of 'planes had been heard at intervals for the past half-hour, the situation, as Mr. Williams said afterwards, was serious.

The short cut through the side gate of the Hall grounds is only a few hundred yards from the village, and in a matter of minutes Mr. Williams and Dai were working their way from the east shrubbery towards the front lawns and terrace. Hardly had they turned the corner when there was a crash, followed by a flash of flame, on the terrace; a woman screamed, and there was a heavier crash, followed by a curse in a rich bass voice, which added, "Where 's the water, where 's the sand, dammit?" and afterwards continued to say little but "dammit."

Mr. Williams and Dai jumped to the situation.

"A bomb, man, a bomb! Come on, now!" shouted Mr. Williams. They hurried round to the terrace steps, Mr. Williams blowing his whistle jerkily as they ran. The conflagration had been seen by the village, however, and the fire squad were even now racing up to harness themselves to the water-cart which stood in the lane.

"Grand the boys were, indeed!" Mr. Williams told me afterwards, "shoutin' and singin' they all were, and the old cart rattlin' and rollin' along. But, indeed, it was sand we wanted, not water. I could see it was oil there on the terrace, spreading all over the place, and a thing like a big old tin blazin' away. 'Mind you, now,' I said to Dai, 'Don't use the jet, in case of an explosion. Sand it is we want, man!' But when I ran to the box there for sand, there was no sand there, look you, only Sir Nigel! Yes, indeed, he 'd fallen into the box backwards somehow and couldn't get out. Well, we couldn't stop to help him just then. I shouted to the boys to fetch earth. 'Flower-pots!' I said. They were smart about it, too. Off to the greenhouse and back again with big old pots of plants, and then—crash, bang!—they threw them on the fire, cheerin' all the time. We had that old fire out in a minute, I tell you. As soon as I saw it was all right I went to help Sir Nigel out of the sand-box. He wasn't hurt, whatever, although I expect he had a few abrasions on his posterior, if you 'll excuse me mentioning such a thing. He gave the boys ten shilling for beer, then, but all the same I had to say a few respectful words of warning to him, me being warden. It wasn't a bomb caused the fire at all, you see, only some old stove he and that lady had on the terrace."

It was true that Uncle Nigel was indirectly responsible for the fire. He had been keeping watch with Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton, and after having several whiskies-and-sodas, a few old brandies and some chicken sandwiches, had heartily agreed with his hostess's suggestion that she should toss him up an omelette in the chafing-dish. She lit the oil-stove and began to busy herself with cooking, and Uncle Nigel chose this singularly inopportune moment to murmur words of devotion down the back of her neck. Apparently he continued to make grabs at her whilst the omelette was getting under way. All might yet have been well, had not the sound of feet crunching the gravel path become audible.

"Be careful! The servants!" hissed Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton, flinging herself away from Uncle Nigel's embrace and unhappily flinging away at the same time the oil-stove, the chafing-dish, the tin of kerosene oil, and the table on which these stood. The oil-stove divided itself into three parts, like the country of Gaul, one part of which blazed merrily. The tin of kerosene lost its cork and the oil spread over the terrace flags and ignited with a terrifying plop. The chafing-dish flew through the air, landing with a clatter, and the table overturned and lay dangerously near the blaze.

Confronted by this crisis, Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton screamed, ran into the dining-room and reappeared with Uncle Nigel's whisky-and-soda, which she flung on to the flames before screaming and running indoors again. Uncle Nigel didn't run away. Like the Roman sentry, he watched the flames spread nearer and nearer. This was not because he felt any desire to remain faithful unto death, but because his first pace forward had caused him to step on the half-cooked omelette. His feet had shot from under him and he had fallen backwards into the narrow packing-case reserved for sand, where he jammed like a cork in a bottle. The case was empty. Ifor, the deaf gardener, who had never known what the sand was there for, anyway, had removed it two days previously to mix with the soil in one of his sprouting frames.

Such were the facts I gleaned from Uncle Nigel, if one excepts a short, whispered soliloquy concerning Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton and women's voluntary services, which I do not propose to repeat in detail.

As for Mrs. Lyme-Chesterton herself, she received a warning the following day from Mr. Williams.

"Solemn I was, too," he said with satisfaction. "She 'd been guilty of a grave offence, mind you. Playing with fire, indeed, you might say she 'd been"—and Mr. Williams' eye rolled ever so slightly—"Playing with fire."

THE END.

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WOMEN IN WARTIME

HOME COMMAND

FLOWERS still bloom in the spring, even in wartime, and veiling again softens the outlines of hats, making a flattering background for the face. The model above, from Gorringes, is in black felt, with a cluster of shell-pink flowers and a wide-meshed veil.

SMALL women naturally prefer clothes designed especially for them to "cut-down" versions of average fashions. They will be interested in the department at Debenham and Freebody, Wigmore Street, which specialises in individual models planned at all points to flatter the small figure. One of their outfits is shown above, in softly blended shades of pink and blue. The kilted skirt is worn with a belted jacket in the darker blue, and the overcoat, hanging loosely from a shoulder yoke, gives an impression of height.

HATS are still, to many women, the most interesting of their accessories. This spring there are no startling changes of line, but, perhaps because of this, there is plenty of individual detail. Gorringes, in the Buckingham Palace Road, have an attractive collection of models both for town and for the country. Straws may soon be difficult to obtain, so hats are being made in fabrics, like the stitched taffeta used for the model on the left. This is worn well forward, and has carnations strewn on the veil looped at the back.

WHEN YOU WAKE WITH A HEAD LIKE LEAD

You can't help waking *sometimes* with a headache. There are lots of things can make you feel below par. Disturbed nights, overwork, worry, smoking, eating or drinking too much—all these cause what doctors call an " acid condition."

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ORIGINAL NO-TRUMP BIDS.

THE importance (pointed out in these notes last week) of opening with no-trump instead of a biddable suit was stressed by P. Hal Sims in *Master Contract* long enough ago—to be accurate in 1935. Why this principle was not universally accepted is one of the many mysteries of contract! Listen: " Blind observation to this rule [opening with the suit] has cost players tens of thousands of games and rubbers. . . . Declaring biddable suits automatically at all times at once, loses your control over the declaration. You will subsequently be unable to steer the ultimate bid into the hand which will profit by it most in the play of the cards." Here are examples taken from " Master Contract "—

SPADES—A, K, Kn, x, x.
HEARTS—A, Kn.
CLUBS—Q, 10, x.
DIAMONDS—K, Kn, x.

This hand is generally considered a sound spade bid. Suppose responding hand holds something of this kind—

(1)	(2)
SPADES—x, x, x.	SPADES—x, x.
HEARTS—Q, 10, x, x.	HEARTS—Q, x, x, x.
CLUBS—K, Kn, x.	CLUBS—Kn, x, x.
DIAMONDS—Q, 10, x.	DIAMONDS—Q, x, x, x.

(1) The response (to one spade), in nearly every case would be one no-trump, and this (the weak) hand would ultimately play the hand at no-trumps. If the opening bid is one no-trump, the response will be two no-trumps; then three spades are bid, followed by three no-trumps, and the declaration is in the right hand. (2) This hand presumably would pass any opening bid. As many tricks will be made at no-trumps as at spades.

Two other types of no-trumps opening—

(1)	(2)
SPADES—K, Kn, x.	SPADES—A, Q, x.
HEARTS—A, 10, x.	HEARTS—9, x, x, x, x
CLUBS—K, Q, 10, x.	CLUBS—A, Kn.
DIAMONDS—A, Kn, x.	DIAMONDS—K, Q, x.

The opening of a club on (1) is likely to produce a response in no-trumps, and the wrong hand will be player. It is essential to reserve no-trump play for this (the strong) hand; hence the opening bid should be no-trump. (2) If the response (to no-trump) is in any suit other than spades, hearts are bid, but the opening must be in no-trumps, because (*a*) if the final declaration is no-trumps, this hand must play it; (*b*) a heart opening is more likely than not to give partner false information.

And now, perhaps a little late in the day, Culbertson himself has modified his system to meet these situations. At least, here is a hand from actual play published in an American newspaper—

	SPADES—A, K, Q, x, x. HEARTS—A, Q, x. CLUBS—A, Kn. DIAMONDS—K, Q, x.	
	N	
SPADES—Kn, 9, x, x. HEARTS—10, 7, 3. CLUBS—K, 9, 8, x, x. DIAMONDS—8.	W E	SPADES—10, x. HEARTS—K, Kn, x, x, x. CLUBS—Q, x, x. DIAMONDS—A, x, x.
	S	
	SPADES—x, x. HEARTS—9, 8. CLUBS—10, x, x. DIAMONDS—Kn, 10, 9, x, x, x.	

According to Mrs. Culbertson, North bid two spades, and South, *conventionally*, had to bid two no-trumps; North raised to three, and on the lead of a club by West, the contract was down. But note: the conventional response is now altered; any six suit, or a five suit as good as Q, Kn, x, x, x, may be bid (over a two opening); so here South would bid three diamonds, North three no-trumps, and *North will make* three no-trumps! It is worth noting, too, that " The Four Aces " would *open* the bidding with three no-trumps on the North hand, which, anyhow, makes sure of the play eventually being in the right hand.

SOLUTIONS OF CROSS-WORD PUZZLES, MARCH 19.

"THE SKETCH" CROSS-WORD.

ACROSS.—1. Cremate. 5. Bunches. 9. Notting Hill Gate. 10. Army. 11. Madam. 12. Stem. 15. Erosive. 16. Discard. 17. Enigmas. 19. Chandos. 21. Trap. 22. Truro. 23. Peer. 26. Unintentionally. 27. Tenable. 28. Crashed.

DOWN.—1. Concave. 2. Extemporisation. 3. Avid. 4. Engrave. 5. Brigand. 6. Nile. 7. Health and wealth. 8. Steamed. 13. Films. 14. Assay. 17. Entrust. 18. Strange. 19. Cardiac. 20. Strayed. 24. Stub. 25. Anna.

"THE SKETCH" DIFFICULT CROSS-WORD.

ACROSS.—1. Troop ships. 9. Puma. 10. Hand-to-hand. 11. Endure. 12. Ewers. 15. Shame. 18. Brill. 19. Notable. 20. Rated. 21. Attic. 22. Useless. 23. Nurse. 24. Tacks. 26. Burst. 29. Tiptoe. 31. Good nature. 32. Maid. 33. Destructor.

DOWN.—2. Road. 3. Oldham. 4. Stone. 5. Inane. 6. Sides. 7. Futuristic. 8. Raven locks. 13. Watteau. 14. Rubbers. 15. Spring time. 16. Anthropoid. 17. Endue. 18. Beast. 25. Arctic. 26. Begad. 27. Rooks. 28. Tenor. 30. Trio.

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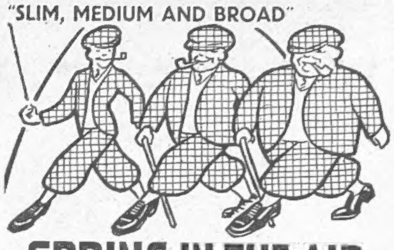

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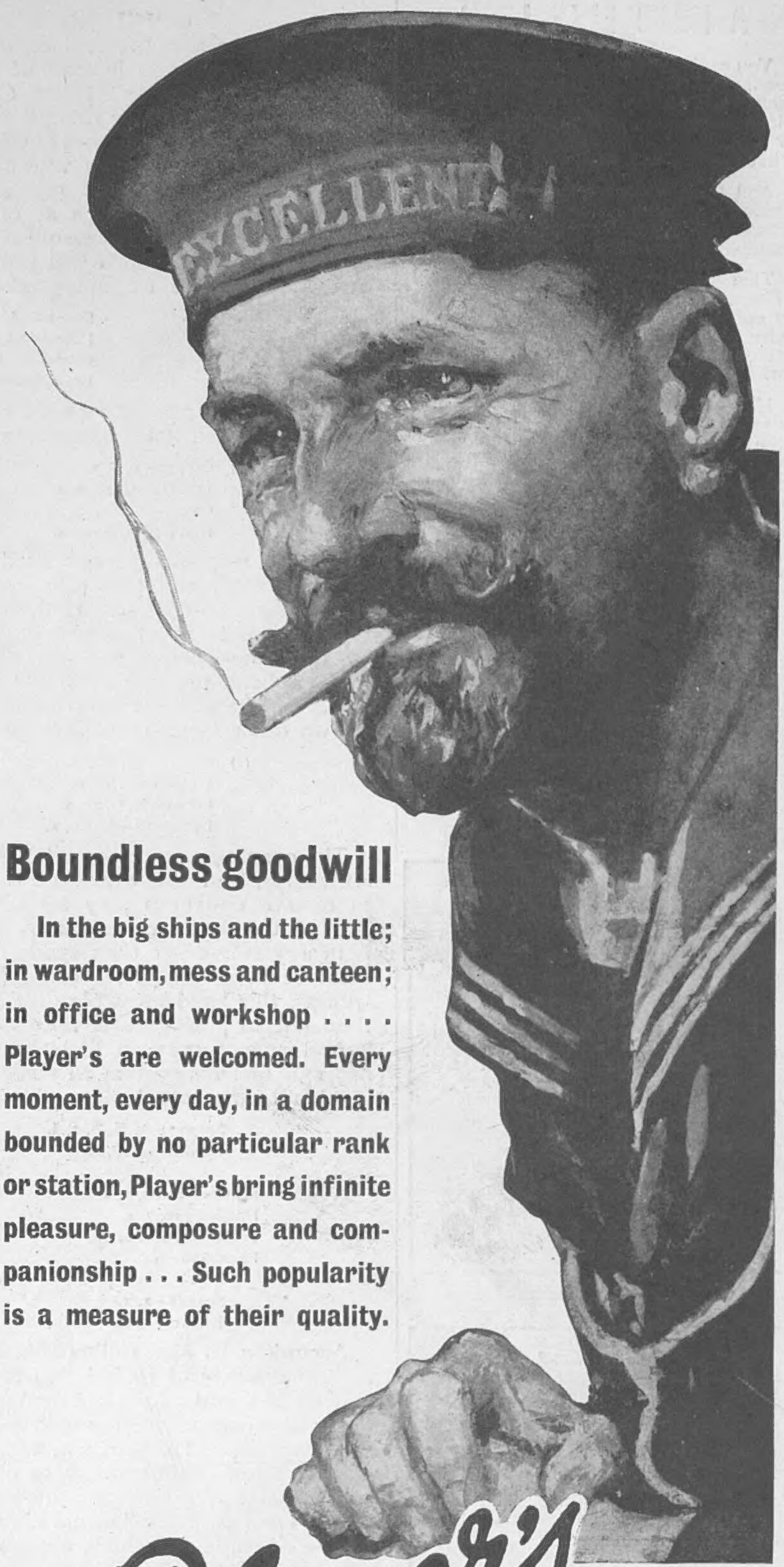

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